

The Role of Young Professionals in River Restoration in Ontario

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As with any scientific field, the advancement of river science and restoration depends on the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next. Only then can the standards of practice evolve and grow. This is particularly important for natural channel design and river science, as the principles and dynamics at play can be complex and interrelated.

This presentation will examine the role of young professionals in the field of river science, focusing on some of the knowledge and communication gaps which currently exist. Both presenters have completed undergraduate and graduate degrees in river science and restoration, and recently started working in professional capacities. Their fresh perspectives on some of the challenges and rewards of starting careers in natural channels will help to inform discussions and initiatives for practitioners in the field, across varying levels of experience.

This presentation aims at highlighting this knowledge gap and provides a framework to help inform young professionals of the process. As with any career, is it important that young professionals understand what resources are available to undertake studies, further their training and expand their knowledge of the field. This presentation will highlight some of the fundamental resources and training programs available for natural channel management and design, and provide input onto how these programs can be expanded into the future.

Finally, this presentation will reflect on the panel discussion from the 5th Conference on Natural Channel Systems and provide insight into how a centralized natural channels institution could be beneficial to young professionals by providing a centralized resource center. These recommendations will draw from examples of other similar institutions.

Biography

Cailey is an engineer intern (EIT) at Aquafor Beech Ltd and Jeff is an engineer at Stantec Consulting Ltd.. Both presenters collaborate with leading experts to undertake erosion assessments, design river restoration solutions and analyze flood hazards. Cailey has been working in the field for almost 3 years and Jeff has been working for 4 years. While both presenters are young professionals, they have gained a good understanding of the practice, having been involved in several projects from proposal to construction. Both Cailey and Jeff have master's in the Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Waterloo, where both investigated the interaction between physical river processes and habitat linkages.